

#### **XIV. CONCLUSIONS**

Full realization of the potential habitat value in the Lake Odessa project area has been hindered by repeated levee failure, flooding, sedimentation, and lack of water level management capability. Establishing areas containing reliable aquatic/wetland habitat will allow the project area to realize the highest benefit to migratory birds, wintering fish, and other local wildlife.

The recommended project enhancement features for Lake Odessa—moist soil unit enhancement, fisheries dredging, levee restoration, fish nursery, and mast tree/sand prairie plantings—are designed to meet the project's goals of restoring and protecting wetland, terrestrial, and aquatic habitat. These goals will be met by reducing forest fragmentation, increasing bottomland hardwood diversity, enhancing migratory bird habitat, restoring sand prairie habitat, increasing habitat for overwintering fish, providing safe areas for developing fish, and protecting habitat areas and archeological sites.

Assessment of the future with-project scenario shows definite increases in total habitat units over the 50-year project life for the target species, as well as a majority of other wetland and aquatic dwelling species considered. These increases represent quantification of the projected outputs: improved habitat quality and increased preferred habitat quality.

The project is consistent with and fully supports the overall goals and objectives of the Upper Mississippi River System-Environmental Management Program, the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, and the Partners in Flight Program.